

## **AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**

**MAY 12, 2005**

**Members Present:** Frank Lattuca, Henry Peirce, Elsie Fetterman, Barbara Sutherland, Al Byam, Rosemary Kofler, Doris Holden, *Treasurer* (arrived late)

**Absent:** Susan Whitbourne,

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Interim Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Program Director/Services), Karen Erman (Management Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

**Others:** Marge Babb, Gerald Weiss (Liaison to the COA)

### **Welcome**

Meeting called to order at 9:10 AM. Frank Lattuca was acting as chair and welcomed all members and guests. A letter of resignation effective immediately was received from COA Chair, Jean Haggerty, due to health reasons. She will make herself available to help with any transition. The members accepted her letter with regret and stated that she will be sorely missed.

Elsie recommended that Jean be nominated for the 2005 AARP Andrus Award for Community Service. The Council unanimously agreed to all nominate Jean. The deadline for nominations is July 1<sup>st</sup>. Nancy is putting together the necessary paperwork.

### **Minutes of Meeting**

Minutes of April 14, 2005, were reviewed and accepted as amended.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Update on Resolution of Fundraising Issue:**

Nancy reported that the issues related to the Senior Trust and fundraising are being worked on by Alan Seewald, Town Council. He will be drawing up a contract to separate the COA from the Friends Group so that we can come into compliance. A Friends Group will then be established and a vote will be taken to move any money under the control of COA to the Friends Group. This will be set up in a way that the COA will have an input on how the money is handled and perhaps Doris as Treasurer can be involved.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **"Into Amherst":**

Maura reported that "Into Amherst" was held on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. A total of 287 students registered, but the number of volunteers was closer to 300 as many showed up without pre-registering. All volunteers met on the common and there were 36 work sites. This was a huge collaboration effort with the UMass Office of Community Relations, Community Service Learning Office and Student Affairs Office. When the larger number of students showed up there was some confusion, however, meeting on the Town Common gave the event much more visibility. There was food, goody bags and raffles after the event. By approximately 8 PM the event had ended and all went well. This event was very time consuming but it was a positive event for the Town. The goal is to have another "Into Amherst" in the fall. Hopefully, this will be coordinated by another Town department as the Senior Center is very short-staffed and this is a huge amount of work.

Elsie asked Maura to record these statistics in the Senior Center Activities Report. Maura will do so.

#### **Report on Elder Care Conference May 11<sup>th</sup>:**

Maura, Barbara and Doris attended the Annual Elder Care Conference for Western Massachusetts on May 11<sup>th</sup> at Mont Marie Conference Center in Holyoke. The topic discussed was "The Aging Adventure: Image and Reality". In all there were nine different workshops. All that attended were very excited and pleased at what they learned. Maura stated that the biggest issue now is Social Security. Everyone should contact their State and Local Legislators and let them know that they need to fight to save Social Security.

#### **SALT Conference:**

Hank and Nancy along with others attended the Annual SALT Conference last week. Issues discussed at the conference were senior drivers, Identity theft, Alzheimer's and other quality programs.

Hank reported that the RUOK (the computer reassurance program) has 10 participants. Also, there have been over 1,400 house numbering signs installed and the program is going well. Maura mentioned that she has heard of a program called the Yellow Dot Program where people put a yellow dot on their glove compartment of their car that indicates to first responders of an accident that "File of Life" information is inside the glove compartment. Hank had not heard of this but it is a good idea.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Town Manager and Select Board recommendations going into Town Meeting:**

Nancy explained that the Town Manager, Select Board and Finance Committee budget recommendations will be going to Town Meeting. One of the positions (not the Social Worker) will be cut back to four days a week. This will be the Program Director position.

Gerald Weiss, the COA Liaison, stated that the Select Board reviewed the Town Manager's recommended budget cuts totaling \$358,000. The Select Board reviewed every department's suggested cut and Gerry stated that when it came to the Senior Center cut, he objected. The outcome of that discussion was that Barry recommended cutting \$7,881 and the Select Board recommended cutting less, \$5,221 (a difference of \$2,660). The Finance Committee has yet to convene to make its recommendations and the outcome of this is not known. All three group recommendations will be going to Town meeting vote and the outcome of this is unknown to all until Town Meeting vote.

Gerry stated that the one big problem now is that some of the Unions still have not settled their contracts with the Town. Health Insurance is the big issue. The Town's Health Insurance Fund has been under-funded for several years now. Insurance rates are recommended to be raised 36%. The Town wants to introduce new Insurance plans but cannot implement them until the Unions have settled. Co-payments seem to be the sticky points right now.

### **COA Strategy for Town Meeting:**

Nancy wants COA volunteers for a subcommittee to work with her on putting together a handout for Town Meeting members which will explain the Senior Center's budget for the last 5 years. Frank and Al will meet with Nancy to work on this. Gerry suggested that if a handout is prepared, it should be available at Town Meeting at least twice before the Senior Center budget comes up so that Town Meeting members have a chance to read it. There is also an overhead projector/power point set up for use at Town Meeting.

### **AARP Andrus Award of Community Service:**

This was discussed at the beginning of the meeting, and the Council agreed to nominate Jean Haggerty for this award.

### **Eveline Sears Senior Activist Award:**

Nancy stated that this award has not been given out for at least two years. This award should be given out to a Senior Center volunteer each year. Nancy would like members of the COA to volunteer to meet to discuss nominees for this award and to help plan a special volunteer recognition party. Frank & Barbara volunteered to help Nancy with this task.

## **SENIOR TRUST**

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Doris Holden reported that she transferred the \$12,878.06 for nursing services at the Nursing Center to the Town of Amherst Accountant's Office. The balance in the checking account as of May 12, 2005 is \$550.90. There has been a slight decrease in investments and the total assets are \$80,779.76. If any bills need to be paid, Doris can transfer money from Edward Jones. The Treasurer's report was accepted as written.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **HVES:**

Barbara reported on the monthly HVES meeting that she attended on May 3rd. The feature presentation this month was Jan Stiefel, Attorney, Western Mass Legal Services, who spoke on her overall legal services work as well as on living wills and health care proxies.

**Transportation:**

Maura sent out a letter out to the local faith communities explaining the two Senior Center home delivered meal programs and asking for volunteer drivers. Also, Maura also encouraged the Faith Communities to discuss how to get members without transportation to Sunday services when the bus routes are cut during the summer.

**Bylaws:**

Doris has not heard from any COA members on the draft revision of the Amherst Council on Aging By-Laws that she and Jean worked on. Nancy will email the members the draft Bylaw to review to make suggestions and additions for the next meeting. Rosemary volunteered to work with Doris as Jean has resigned from the COA.

**Nominating Committee:**

Nancy asked the Council members to recommend people who would be a good candidate for the COA and willing to serve.

The Council members agreed unanimously to appoint Al Byam and Barbara Sutherland as Co-Chairs of the COA, and Frank Lattuca as Vice-Chair.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Al Byam reported that there is no new news on the PVTa bus cuts. All hearings have been held and they are waiting for the State '07 Plan.

Nancy will compose a letter of thanks to be sent to Jean Haggerty from the COA, the Amherst Senior Center staff, volunteers and participants for her involvement and participation as a COA member since 2002.

**Next Meeting is Thursday, June 9th at 9:00 AM.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 AM.

**Respectfully submitted, Karen Erman, Management Assistant**